

# DONCASTER CULTURE STRATEGY 2030

INTRODUCTION by Team Doncaster .....	3
OUR VISION FOR CULTURE.....	4
DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY .....	6
OUR PRIORITIES .....	7
STRATEGIC CONTEXT.....	10
<b>NATIONAL</b> .....	10
<b>REGIONAL</b> .....	12
<b>LOCAL</b> .....	13
THE CURRENT SITUATION IN DONCASTER .....	15
<b>Key Facts</b> .....	15
<b>Previous strategy – progress towards our ambitions</b> .....	15
<b>Overview of Resident and Member Engagement</b> .....	16
<b>Strategic Challenges</b> .....	18
OPPORTUNITIES .....	18
<b>Funding</b> .....	18
<b>Engagement</b> .....	20
<b>Development of digital provision</b> .....	20
THEMES.....	20
<b>2. COMMUNITY ARTS</b> .....	21
<b>3. ARTS IN EDUCATION</b> .....	22
<b>4. ARTS AND HEALTH</b> .....	24
<b>5. LIBRARIES, LITERATURE AND LEARNING</b> .....	25
<b>6. MUSEUMS, HERITAGE AND ARCHIVES</b> .....	26
<b>7. CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES</b> .....	27
<b>8. EVENTS</b> .....	28
<b>9. SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b> .....	29
<b>10. OUTDOORS, LANDSCAPES AND URBAN REALM</b> .....	31
WORKING BETTER TOGETHER.....	34
<b>Delivery Partners</b> .....	35
<b>Governance and monitoring progress</b> .....	35

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Doncaster's Culture Strategy.

This strategy builds on the Team Doncaster Borough Strategy – Doncaster Delivering Together (DDT), which sets out ambitions on a range of vital themes such as the economy, education, health and social care, community safety and the environment. As well as identifying 8 priorities for the coming years, DDT reiterates Team Doncaster's commitment to working together: a strong and resilient partnership in which public and private sector organisations, businesses, residents and voluntary and community sector organisations put Doncaster first .

Running through this and all the other work of Team Doncaster is the physical and mental well-being of our residents. This has always been a key focus, but it has taken on additional resonance in recent years. In the strange and trying times we are living in caused by the worldwide pandemic and economic uncertainty, we are more mindful than ever that people need something else outside of the daily routine, something that provides relief, distraction, stimulation, learning and fun. One of the key vehicles for this is Culture.

Culture is not something that exists in a vacuum, nor is it an impractical after-thought or a luxury. Not only does Culture have a positive impact on the economy in terms of tourism, inward investment and fund-raising, it can have a huge impact on quality of life, particularly regarding the health and well-being of both communities and individuals.

Culture is a not a clear cut term, and not everyone agrees on its definition: it means different things to different people. To some people, culture means creativity – visual or performance arts and crafts, for example. To others it means physical activity and sport, or events, or heritage - there is no single 'right' answer. Culture and cultural experiences come in myriad forms and are everywhere, and for everyone.

This is the second Culture Strategy that has been published for Doncaster. It brings together a shared ambition for Culture that has been developed in collaboration with sector stakeholders and Doncaster residents to develop a new 10-year strategy that will build upon the assets, talents and passions that already exist in our city, as well as building new assets to further grow the sector. It is not a starting point for Doncaster Culture, as our Culture already exists. It is, however, a shared commitment to work together in order to continue to provide great and varied cultural experiences and opportunities for all.

Doncaster is a diverse 'place of places'. It comprises over eighty communities, all with their own history, their own interests, customs and culture. We want not just to shine a light upon Culture, but to ensure that our residents and stakeholders have a way of influencing it in whatever way suits them. It does belong to them after all.

This document looks to the future, it details both our challenges and the ambitions we have for Doncaster as a place of Culture. We have a shared vision of where we want to be in 2030, and it is exciting and diverse. Culture is one of our most positive characteristics, and we intend to continue to celebrate it.

## Team Doncaster

## OUR VISION FOR CULTURE

***Doncaster is a place of places with a varied and vibrant culture. Our communities flourish by expressing their own creativity and connecting through shared cultural experiences of power and meaning.***

Doncaster is a place where engineering and innovation meet creativity, where a unique cluster of arts, heritage, built and natural landscapes, sports, leisure and health and well-being is having an impact, not only on our residents, but also on regional, national and international visitors and partners. The skill of our cultural organisations and creatives has brought millions of pounds worth of investment into our borough, as well as increasing partnerships and community engagement in a way that is beginning to be recognised on the wider cultural stage. Our cutting-edge work in culture and well-being (including contributing to countering climate change) is well-known, as is our nurturing of next generation talent in a number of spheres, including film and digital, literature and visual art. In short, Doncaster is becoming a cultural hub, and this document not only celebrates how far we've come, but also lays out how far we can and want to go.

The notion of societal well-being has changed over the years to encompass far more than economic and material prosperity. Linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Learning Compass 2030 sets out the competencies students need to thrive in 2030. These include core literacy and numeracy skills, as well as data and digital literacy, good physical and mental health, and social and emotional skills and competencies. In addition, Nesta's Creativity and the Future of Skills report (2018) highlights the increasing importance of creativity to the growth of jobs between now and 2030.

We believe that Culture, Education, Skills and wellbeing are intrinsically linked, and this is recognised in the Team Doncaster Delivering Together strategy. Creativity is the process by which, either individually or with others, we make something new: a work of art, or a reimagining of an existing work. We want everyone to have equity of opportunity to access a full range of activity, enabling the creative experience to be fulfilling and of a consistently high quality, wherever in the Borough people reside and whatever their background.

Doncaster is incredibly well-served by a number of hard working, long standing organisations and institutions that are the very backbone of culture in our city. The Music Hub, Darts, Cast, Right up Our Street, Higher Rhythm, Doncaster Heritage and others provide enormous sector expertise and are a key part of the infrastructure and delivery of the strategy, as well as playing an integral part of its creation.

In addition, Doncaster is also blessed with a wealth of self-organised local initiatives (for example knit and natter clubs, urban farming, 50 book clubs). They are the bedrock of this strategy and our cultural future and we are hugely fortunate to have an amazing burgeoning cultural scene built on strong, distinctive narratives. During the pandemic, these groups came to the fore, helping residents tackle loneliness, isolation and boredom during lockdown, through a number of innovative schemes including the provision of art and creativity packs for children and adults, online choirs, dance and fitness classes and many, many more kind and compassionate ideas designed at helping people through a tough time. It is supporting these groups and individuals to continue and thrive that will help to drive our 2030 ambition of more resilient, skilled, confident and healthy communities resulting from greater access to impactful experiences and people-led regeneration through great culture.

A united partnership with a collaborative approach, which makes the most of the both the offer and assets that we have to make the change needed in the borough, will bring greater, more diverse opportunity and enable greater consistency across and between the region. This strategy aims to build on and expand the opportunities available for both visitors and residents to access the best unique cultural experiences. Team Doncaster has already transformed its approach to partnership working and the narrative for culture over the past few years, including embedding Culture into the Doncaster Delivering Together Strategy, identifying Culture, sports and heritage as one of the Great 8 priorities. Culture has also been embedded within the Education and Skills Strategy 2030, originally embedded within a specific Centre of Excellence identified for Creative and Digital, now expanded to an additional Centre of Excellence, making 5 in total, the newest being Culture. The Education and Skills Strategy 2030 further includes Culture as one of the sectors integral to develop a Talent Innovation Eco-system to support growth and enable a sustainable pathway of skills to fulfilling lives and careers as seen in the Education and Skills Strategy 2030. Doncaster's Economic Strategy also highlights the valuable contribution Culture makes to our borough, in terms of both events and the visitor economy, and the sector itself.

The total economic footprint of Culture is measured in three ways:

- Direct impact: the value generated and jobs supported directly by arts and culture organisations,
- Indirect impact: the value generated and jobs supported in domestic industries that supply goods and services to arts and culture organisations, and
- Induced impact: the value generated and jobs supported in the wider economy when employees associated with direct and indirect impacts spend their earnings in wider economy.

There are also a number of wider 'spill over' benefits. In addition, Culture is a long-term career option that requires (and provides) unique skills and experience, and the integration of Culture into all we do is hugely important in terms of the diversity, inclusion and completeness of economy and our offer as a City, as well as in our self-image and how we are perceived by others..

We are not waiting for this strategy to be published to begin. We are already on the move, and, despite Covid, we have made enormous progress. Recent opportunities range from an ambitious borough wide schools dance development programme in partnership with the Royal Opera House, as well as two performances at Cast by the Royal Ballet (their only performances in England outside of London that year) performing with a ukulele orchestra, strolling in the park, experiencing world class Audio Visual at the Minster, watching international Rugby games, and many more. Doncaster has hosted an international literary festival, a world-class fashion show, been nominated for national Museum and Heritage awards, a prize at the Montreal Film Festival, and the Guardian International Journalism award. If that wasn't enough, we have also opened a state-of-the-art new integrated Gallery, Library and Museum (Danum Gallery Library and Museum, or D-GLAM), and are in the process of creating a new Archives and Local History Centre, representing an overall Council investment in excess of £12m. The commitment to the sector has been further bolstered with the South Yorkshire Mayor's Combined Authority investment of £450k recovery funds awarded to a range of small and medium size projects, and we are in discussions with a number of national funders about how to further enhance our investment into Culture. Our ambition knows no bounds, and we have momentum and a shared commitment for the future. Our intention is that, by 2030, this Vision is the everyday reality of life in Doncaster, a reality shared and enjoyed by all of our residents in whatever way best works for them.

## DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

The development of this strategy brings together a wider range of sector partners to identify where added value could be achieved; how simple, practical approaches can be adopted, and how to make the most of scarce resources, avoid duplication and learn from best practice. It is important to take advantage of the breadth and depth of opportunity and economies of scale to deliver value for money.

A comprehensive engagement programme has obtained insight and opinion from residents, community groups, elected representatives and a variety of public and private sector organisations.

This engagement identified a series of key Cultural themes around which this strategy is arranged:

1. The Arts
2. Community Arts
3. Arts in Education
4. Arts and Health
5. Libraries, Literature & Learning
6. Museums, Heritage & Archives
7. Creative & Cultural Industries
8. Events
9. Physical Activity and Sport
10. Outdoors, Landscapes, Urban Realm

We have identified a series of theme-specific objectives and actions, as well as a number of cross-cutting objectives or actions that relate to all or multiple themes.

The strategy sets out how Team Doncaster partners will ensure a strong and thriving cultural offer that benefits individuals, families, and wider communities, as well as contributing to the vitality of our neighbourhoods, the City and town centres. Through collaboration amongst cultural and creative practitioners and organisations from grass roots up, this strategy shows how we will foster a sense of community ownership, raise aspirations, and support residents in leading healthy and happy lives.

Detail about the outcomes of engagement activity carried out in the development of this strategy can be found within the Evidence base document, a summary of which includes:

- Several resident engagement exercises including ‘Culture in Doncaster’ (2015), ‘Creating a place brand for Doncaster’ (2015), ‘Doncaster Talks (Summer 2019)’, ‘Doncaster Talks – Doncaster Delivering Together’ (Summer 2021) and ‘Doncaster Talks – Culture Strategy’ (October and November 2021). Feedback was also gained through the Team Doncaster Summit (November 2021) and from young people (January 2022)
- Doncopolitan, a local creative organisation, were commissioned to engage with various existing community groups across the borough.
- Elected representatives were consulted to gather their views as local leaders.
- Sector partners were invited to attend think tank sessions arranged for each theme.

## OUR PRIORITIES

Underpinning our Vision are six clear priorities: simple statements of intent that illustrate what a vibrant, vital and successful Cultural Doncaster would look and feel like, and how it would become self-sustaining and an integral part of life in our city and the wider borough.

<p><b>Doncaster’s cultural activity is shaped by the voices of people who live, work, learn and visit our borough.</b></p>	<p><b>We must support people of all ages, from all household types and all communities to not only access our cultural offer but to have a voice and influence in shaping it</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify what, how, where, and when. A focus on locally identified, themed, and delivered provision.</li> <li>• Ensure cultural opportunities are available for all and can be accessed as part of everyday life.</li> <li>• Tackle financial, locational, and awareness barriers to access.</li> <li>• Exploit technology in the provision and promotion of our offer.</li> </ul> <p>Ensure local people lead discussions and decisions on the development, delivery and promotion of our offer. We need to shout about what we are doing, and ask for people to shout back.</p>
<p><b>Doncaster’s communities have the skills, investment, infrastructure and connections to sustain powerful shared cultural activity</b></p>	<p><b>Doncaster is a place of places, and its 83 communities all have their own culture and cultural history.</b></p> <p><b>We must develop community capacity and assets to encourage and support localised cultural development and delivery of diverse and high-quality cultural experiences.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase resilience, visibility, retained talent and renowned quality of provision.</li> <li>• Increase local partner commissioning and their contribution local economy and employment.</li> <li>• Encourage communities to own their culture, and celebrate it.</li> </ul> <p>Develop sustained relationships between local provision in communities and centralised/borough-wide projects, events, and initiatives.</p>
<p><b>Doncaster makes the most of the potential taking part in arts, culture and creative activity has to transform people’s health and wellbeing</b></p>	<p><b>We must identify and maximise opportunities for cultural experiences to contribute to residents’ health and wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging people of all ages to be physically and mentally active through access to arts and culture.</li> <li>• Removing barriers to engagement, including perceptions that ‘it’s not for me’.</li> <li>• Encouraging people to find their niche.</li> <li>• Tackling social isolation and loneliness.</li> </ul> <p>Focusing on the tangible positives: stimulating, different, fun. Share the secret - tell people what we know!</p> <p>Exploiting the benefits of arts on prescription.</p>

<p><b>Doncaster is a home for learning, mentoring and skills development in the arts, culture and creative industries.</b></p>	<p><b>Provide place-based learning, mentoring and skills development opportunities for all</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the most of our Cultural sector experts, many of whom feel excluded from decision making and discussion and under-recognised for the contribution they make</li> <li>• Culture to become a local Centre of Excellence, thereby informing both the Education and Skills Strategy and the University City HE/FE Agenda</li> <li>• Promote Culture as a viable and desirable career path, and develop access into the cultural sector for young people, including work experience and apprenticeships and opportunities, and encourage involvement, including volunteering, for all ages</li> </ul> <p>Tirelessly promote the value of and ensure the provision of all age life skills or transferable skills developed through creative learning/activity to improve employability, confidence, and resilience.</p>
<p><b>Doncaster places collaboration at the heart of our cultural activity; our local, regional, national and global partnerships drive development and enhance activity</b></p>	<p><b>Collaboration has already put together this strategy, and it is informed not only by local voices, but by Regional issues and national initiatives and policy. This must continue.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In order to deliver the strategy, we must continue to work together at every level, including those regional and national agencies and funding bodies who can support us with their expertise and experience as well as funding as we move forward. This includes liaising with and lobbying national arts and culture organisations to put Doncaster at the forefront of bids for exhibitions, productions and events, making the most of our world class assets and bringing high quality Culture to the city / borough.</li> <li>• An agreed, mutually agreed Doncaster narrative will help us access these opportunities, and best make the case for our involvement.</li> <li>• We must tirelessly horizon scan for opportunities, and learn from best practice around the world. This can only be done together, and if people feel they have a voice and a platform in which they can use it.</li> </ul> <p>In the past, we have not taken all of the opportunities available to us. This is changing, however, and we have not only benefited from foregrounding Culture in terms of funding and new assets, and in successful partnerships with the Royal Opera House and the National Theatre, but we are in advanced discussion with several major organisations about enhancing our offer even further. This would simply not be possible without collaboration, underlining why we are stronger when working together.</p>



<p><b>By inspiring Creativity and boosting Cultural diversity, Doncaster helps to regenerate local economies, attracts visitors and places Culture at the heart of its wider economic development strategies</b></p>	<p><b>Culture has the potential to not only change the lives of residents and communities, but to significantly boost the economy and make Doncaster a better place to visit.</b></p> <p>Our events and existing offer already make a valuable contribution, but, by inspiring, supporting and Creativity and Cultural diversity we can change the way we feel about our City, and how others see us in a hugely positive way, boosting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor numbers</li> <li>• External funding</li> <li>• Investment</li> <li>• Business attraction (sector and general)</li> <li>• The getting, staging and hosting of major Cultural events</li> <li>• Long term opportunities around Doncaster as a destination</li> </ul>
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### Theme-specific objectives and actions

It is recognised that although there are specific objectives for each theme, opportunities to use other themes to achieve those objectives should be sought wherever possible. There are also over-arching priorities, for example the contribution of Tourism and the Visitor Economy to the borough, not just in terms of the economy and community regeneration, but also with regard to perception (inside and outside) and gaining a better understanding what people want, enjoy and participate in. A list of theme-based objectives follows, each prefaced by 'we will'. The 'we' is Team Doncaster in its broadest and fullest sense, including (but not exclusive to) all in Doncaster who help and contribute to culture in whatever capacity.

**The Arts:** We will increase the profile of the arts offer in Doncaster, and establish capacity and self-sustaining community-based partnerships across the creative & arts sector.

**Community Arts:** We will support the reach of community arts as a 'way of life', ensuring all communities have local access as well as a more centralised provision. We will address the challenge of sustainable funding and resourcing. We will enhance grass roots capacity.

**Arts in Education:** We will improve the perceived value of and delivery of arts subjects in the school curriculum. We will support, encourage and promote options for creative participation in and out of a school setting. We will support, encourage and promote creative career paths, in all their variety and complexity. We will foster peer and family support for creative participation and learning, in and out of school. **Arts in Health:** We will establish Doncaster as a centre of excellence for the delivery and integration of arts and health programmes across a wide range of health and social care needs, including the innovative and exciting field of Arts on Prescription.

**Libraries, Literature & Learning:** We will ensure that the borough's image and profile better reflect and includes our literary heritage. We will ensure city and borough-wide activity, with centralised events also having wider locality aspects. We will capitalise on Doncaster's literary/heritage assets, building on the burgeoning literature scene, including published and unpublished writers alike.

**Museums, heritage and archives:** We will develop a thorough understanding of our current provision and our shared plans for the future. We will raise the profile and enhance our heritage offer (for

residents & visitors), and improve engagement across all parts of the community. We will continue to nurture relationships with national heritage bodies and funders.

**Creative and cultural industries:** We will raise the profile of our creative industries sector, and enhance the involvement of the sector in the borough's strategic decision-making. We will enhance the involvement of young people in the sector's strategic decision-making. We will attract and retain Creative Industries to/in Doncaster, and promote and increase an understanding of the sector as a viable and fulfilling career path.

**Events:** We will reduce barriers to participation in events and seek to include unheard voices. We will better articulate our Cultural offer, promoting Doncaster's unique selling points & promulgate a cohesive narrative that can be understood in a local, national and international context. We will challenge negative media perceptions, and be clearer and more inclusive in our communication, PR and publicity re Events.

**Sport and Physical Activity:** Supporting the enhancement of the culture, arts and heritage sector in the refresh of the Get Doncaster Moving strategy, as well as engaging communities and residents and attracting visitors into the borough through both sport and physical activity participation and spectating.

**Outdoors, landscapes and public realm:** We will identify, communicate, and raise the profile of Doncaster's outdoor, landscape, and urban realm offer. We will continue to encourage resident use of our outdoor, landscape, and urban realm offer, and enhance the offer with new facilities, activities and events where possible and appropriate. We will encourage and support an environmental protection mind-set amongst communities, leading by example with best environmental practices and estate management wherever possible and practicable.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### NATIONAL

Some of our themes are already supported by national organisations and/or Government departments with national strategies, plans and ambitions that our strategy needs to be consistent with. These include but are not limited to:

#### Levelling up

The Government [Levelling Up White Paper](#) (2022), details how they want to spread opportunity and prosperity to all parts of the UK. It revolves around 12 national levelling up missions; a shift in 'power' from Whitehall to local leaders; and the start of a decade-long project, with new policies announced across numerous thematic policy areas.

The 'new' national missions, which have been driven by 6 capitals (physical, human, intangible, financial, social and institutional), encapsulate the drivers of levelling up. These missions revolve around: Living Standards, R&D, Transport Infrastructure, Digital Connectivity, Education, Skills, Health, Wellbeing, Pride in Place, Housing, Crime, and Local Leadership. Missions will be given status in law in a Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

Specific Arts and Culture-related commitments include 100% of the Arts Council England funding uplift agreed at the Autumn 2021 Spending Review being spent outside of London. A new National Youth Guarantee will be launched so that by 2025, every young person in England will have access to regular

out of school activities; £230m investment in grassroots football will be delivered – delivering 850 pitches; and the 2023-26 National Portfolio funding round will soon be launched. They also commit to identifying over 100 levelling up priority places outside of London for Arts Council England engagement and investment.

### **The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Arts, Health and Wellbeing**

The APPG report [Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing](#) examines how engagement with the arts and culture can positively impact health, wellbeing, and quality of life for people of all ages. However, engagement with the publicly funded arts is relatively low among socially and economically disadvantaged households, and so improving access and engagement is essential to create and sustain healthier lives.

The APPG on Arts, Health and Wellbeing sees itself as part of a growing movement advancing the ‘transformation of the health and care system from a hospital-centred and illness-based system to a person-centred and health-based system. Their report shows that the arts can enable people to take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and enjoy a better quality of life. It considers the growth of social prescribing, whereby people are referred to activities in the community, in preference to medication and looks at the benefits to health and the cost savings arts on prescription activities could provide.

### **Arts Council**

The Arts Council are the national development agency for creativity and culture. Their aim is to grow skills, knowledge, and networks to help establish the conditions in which creativity and culture can flourish across the country. They also conduct research, give expert advice, promote partnership, and do other activities to help the creative and cultural sector develop. By 2030, they want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. Their ‘Let’s Create’ strategy centres around three Outcomes that are consistent with those identified locally in Doncaster:

- Creative People: Everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life.
- Cultural Communities: Villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture.
- A creative and cultural country: England’s cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.

### **Historic England**

Historic England helps people care for, enjoy, and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment. This is achieved by championing and understanding historic places, identifying and protecting our heritage, supporting change, and providing expertise at a local level. The Historic England Future Strategy (2021) centres around three outcomes:

- Thriving Places: collaborate with people and partners to secure vibrant and sustainable futures for historic places.
- Connected Communities: bring communities together by discovering and celebrating local heritage, and by protecting the character of historic places.
- Active Participation: inspire and equip people to act in support of the places they care about.

### **English Heritage**

We already have a partnership with English Heritage based around two of our greatest assets, Conisbrough Castle and Brodsworth Hall and Gardens. They are world experts in the management of historic buildings and sites, as well as hugely innovative and experienced leaders in terms of education and engagement, and we benefit greatly from our association with them.

### **National Archives**

[The National Archives](#) is the official archive and publisher for the UK government. They lead the archives sector and perform the Historical Manuscripts Commission's functions in relation to independent archives. Its support and advice help archives across the UK to develop and enhance their services, facilities, and collections. They work with all archives, including national institutions and local authorities; universities, libraries, and museums; businesses and charities; private and specialist institutions.

Their current strategy, [Archives for Everyone](#), sets out their ambition to become inclusive, entrepreneurial, and impactful. Their strategic vision for the sector, [Archives Unlocked](#), outlines their leadership priorities under the themes of trust, enrichment, and openness, and describes their work to encourage a sustainable and innovative archives sector. It focuses on the needs and potential of archives across the country and realises in practical and tangible terms their unique relevance in preserving the diversity of our nation's heritage. Its key strategic themes include diversity and inclusion, innovation and risk, advocacy and reputation, and health and wellbeing.

### **Sport England**

Sport England is an arm's length body of Government responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and helping more people get active. Doncaster is one of 12 Local Delivery Pilots where Sport England work alongside our own 'Get Doncaster Moving' strategy to tackle the complex problem of inactivity amongst our residents.

Currently, the opportunities to get involved in sport and activity depend too much on your background, your gender, your bank balance, and your postcode. Sport England are determined to tackle this and unlock the advantages of sport and physical activity for everyone.

## **REGIONAL**

Culture is an emerging priority at a regional level with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) [Strategic Economic Plan \(2021-2041\)](#) setting out the vision that South Yorkshire will have vibrant town and city centres with rich sporting, cultural and leisure offers attracting people and visitors from across the country. The [Chamberlain Walker report \(2020\)](#) highlighted the untapped potential of the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector in the region and provided a set of recommendations to unlock this potential. These recommendations are being incorporated into a work programme under the Arts, Culture and Heritage Project Director, who is working closely with local authorities and key institutions across South Yorkshire to develop a transformational programme of investment in our cultural and creative assets.

As part of this work, commissions are underway to map the creative industries of our region, determine the skills pipeline for the creative sector, identify areas of growth and offer recommendations for future investment. Work has also been commissioned to undertake deep engagement stakeholders from across the sector and beyond, to gather evidence and intelligence which will inform the development of a South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) arts, culture and heritage strategy. The specification of these commissions has been developed in conjunction with the local authorities, who remain involved in overseeing their delivery.

We will be able to draw upon this work and in turn, The Doncaster Culture strategy, and associated research and engagement, will be crucial to inform regional research and development of the regional strategy and priorities which will have both localised and regional benefit.

## LOCAL

Team Doncaster strategic partnership has a series of overarching strategies and plans which Doncaster stakeholders have co-developed, approved and adopted. In September 2021 Team Doncaster launched their new 10-year Borough Strategy - [Doncaster Delivering Together](#) (DDT) - with a central vision of “Thriving people, places and planet”, supported by six wellbeing goals for the borough:



This strategy makes clear the interdependencies between education and culture, with a clear goal around ‘Skilled and Creative’. Creativity is a golden thread through this goal: as a key skill needed for life and work; as crucial for economic prosperity and meeting the big borough challenges, and as central to enabling vibrant communities with a rich cultural scene.

The strategy also sets out the ‘Great 8 Priorities’ which will help to achieve the wellbeing goals, explicitly referencing the promotion of cultural opportunities in all forms:



These goals and priorities will be achieved through new ways of working: whole life, whole system integration; regenerative development; intelligence led interventions; shared responsibilities, and working closer with communities.

The Borough Strategy is supported by a range of Team Doncaster policies, strategies and plans which include:

[Environment & Sustainability Strategy](#)

[Inclusive Growth Strategy](#)

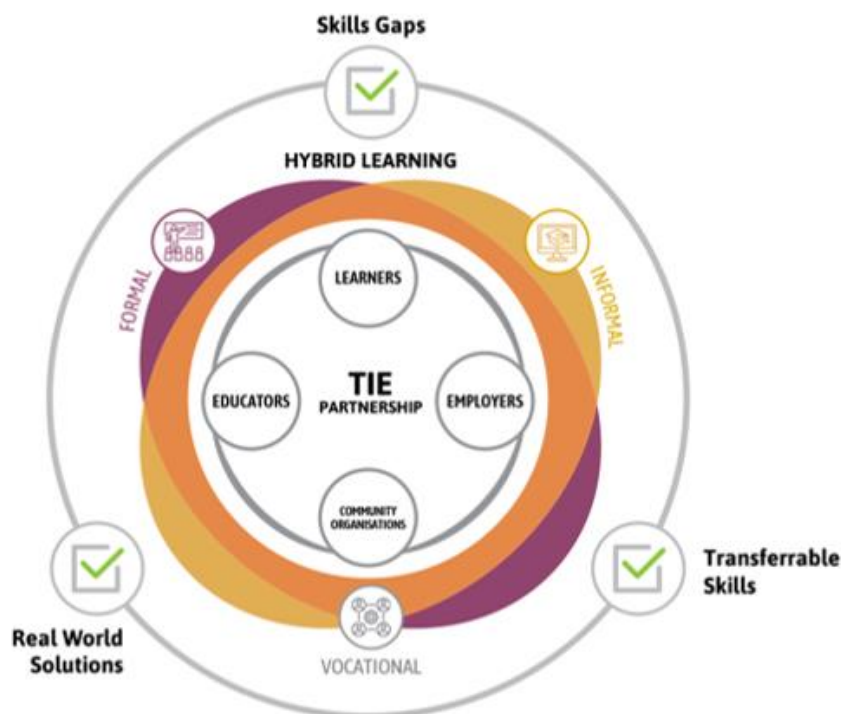
[Local Plan](#)

Locality plans (in development)  
[Community Safety Strategy](#)  
[Housing Strategy](#)  
[Health & Wellbeing Strategy](#)  
[Place Plan](#)  
[Education and Skills 2030](#)  
[Visitor Economy Strategy](#) (due for refresh)  
**Culture Strategy 2030** (this document)

*[Underlined documents are link-enabled to published documents; plain text are currently in development]*

If Culture is to become truly embedded in what we do, we not only need to ensure that we cross-reference the above through a Cultural lens, but also to integrate Culture into all our plans and strategies from henceforward.

If we consider Education and Skills, for example, Culture is a vital component. One of the key elements of this strategy is the Talent and Innovation Ecosystem, a ground-breaking transformational blueprint for the future.



The Talent and Innovation Ecosystem (TIE) aims to bring together learners, educators, community partners, and employers to enable problem-based learning that develops a broad range of competencies. It serves to better align the education system with our industry specialisms, allowing us to develop our own academies and build future sustainability for skills in key sectors going forward, ensuring an ongoing employment pathway, support and investment and a commitment to apprenticeships linked to the wider skills agenda. Culture will be established as a fifth ‘centre of excellence’ (alongside Engineering; Healthcare, Creative & Digital and Green Tech), putting it at the centre of what we want to excel at providing in Doncaster, both for residents and at a regional, national and international level.



The development of a Culture Strategy for Doncaster offers the opportunity to celebrate existing cultural assets and build upon the great and varied work already underway. However, the cultural offer could be further enhanced through greater collaboration and the overarching vision for the sector which this strategy aims to achieve. This strategy has been developed in partnership with cultural organisations, and will sit alongside the individual business plans and strategies of each of those organisations, as well as being a public facing document which sets out our aims and ambitions for all to see. Where areas of the sector do not currently have an agreed shared strategy or strong sectoral voice (such as the Creative Industries) it aims to identify steps to aid progress, sustainability, and visibility. One of the most important factors is for this strategy to further embed cultural activity within Team Doncaster and to promote cross-sector ownership of the agenda. This will ensure the best possible results, including a wider impact on the public, better results for the sector and maximised investment for the borough.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION IN DONCASTER

### Key Facts:

- Doncaster has a similar age profile to other areas; but around one percentage point lower than the regional and national average in the 20-24 age group, and around a 1% higher proportion in 55-64 age group.
- We expect a 25% increase in over 65s (14,500) by 2030; this will have wide ranging implications for local services such as health and social care. This is in line with national figures. By 2032, the number aged 65+ will equal the number aged up to 19 years in local, regional and national terms.
- 92% of our residents are White British, which is higher than the 86% seen across Yorkshire and Humber. The next two largest groups are 'Other White' (3%) and 'Asian' (3%). Nationally, 80% of residents are White British, with 8% 'Asian / British Asian' and 5% 'Other White'. Understanding the extent of ethnic diversity is important for shaping policy and service delivery to best meet the needs of a diverse population.
- Relative to some other areas, housing affordability is not a significant issue overall for Doncaster. There are, however, broad variations across the borough.
- Doncaster's happiness rating has increased marginally from 7.18 to 7.23, which is lower than comparator areas. Levels of anxiety have increased from 3.03 to 3.28, which is lower than comparator areas. Regionally and nationally, happiness is down and anxiety is up (2020/21 data)
- Doncaster has low levels of social mobility, ranking 298 out of 324 local authorities. This is a slight improvement since 2017 (Doncaster was ranked 301). Levels of deprivation vary significantly across the borough, but many of our deprived areas are amongst the most deprived in England.
- Doncaster is a borough made up of many unique localities and communities, each with their own history, heritage, strengths and challenges.

These facts show the diversity of the people and situations in Doncaster. The cultural offer in the borough needs to reflect these diversities and ensure that there are opportunities for everyone to get involved.

### **Previous strategy – progress towards our ambitions**

The previous strategy's key aims were to raise the profile of Doncaster through creativity and culture, to encourage people from all communities and backgrounds to access cultural experiences, and to use culture, creatives, and creativity to drive inclusive growth. Partners have come together to plan and coordinate our activity, interventions and events, a non-exhaustive selection of which are listed below:

- The new Danum Gallery Library and Museum opened in the town centre and public art has been delivered in the Civic Square and Rail Station town centre city gateway.
- Doncaster's first Culture Week took place in 2018, bringing together a programme of outdoor theatre, live music, exhibitions, workshops and finished with the 2-day 'DN Festival Does Space' festival. The Doncaster Storytelling festival launched in 2021, 'The books that made us' exhibition took place in The Frenchgate Centre, and the Booker Prize.
- A new SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) network and a Creative and Cultural Strategic Partnership (CCSP) was established to support and advance diverse cultural leadership and share sector experience. Partners have developed joined up delivery and marketing groups and developed a Creative Doncaster website and social media presence.
- A new Public Art strategy was launched in Autumn 2018 and the Council is working with and on behalf of partners with the South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority to develop a South Yorkshire Culture Strategy.
- Doncaster Cultural Education Partnership have organised Arts Teachmeets to provide creative Continuing Professional Development to teachers and creative partners, and there is now a creative careers resource: <https://www.creativecareersdoncaster.com/>
- Cast has increased its audiences to 100k annually, and has led on two key national partnerships with world renowned arts organisations such as The Royal Opera House and The National Theatre, levering in substantial sums of additional funding into the Borough over the last four years.
- Darts have grown exponentially over the last few years, doubling their activity at The Point and providing over 1,400 sessions per year at almost 80 different venues across the borough. During the pandemic, they provided an ambitious offer of online and offline activity for all, including Zoom sessions, commissioned doodle books, delivered 1,250 'Bags of Creativity' for vulnerable families, and postal packs tailored to our groups.
- Darts also founded and chair Doncaster Arts and Health Board with strategic health and culture partners including Public Health, NHS, Cast and Heritage Doncaster, collaboratively developing a portfolio of pilot projects with an ultimate ambition of rolling out a collaborative 'arts on prescription' offer for the whole Doncaster population.
- The DGT Arts and Culture Programme Board unlocked a £400k direct award to establish Doncaster Creates to work with the creative partners to bring in new investment into Culture in Doncaster. With Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust as the host body, this has resulted in such well-received initiatives as Birdsong, Artbomb, the re-imagination of Baxter Park and the incredible Nomad Clan mural that now welcomes people to the City as they leave the Railway Station.

Despite all this activity and delivery, we have limited evidence as to the impact of all this activity on the overall aims to raise Doncaster's profile, encourage greater access and drive inclusive growth. Some of this can be attributed to the pandemic, but not all. Going forward, as an integral part of this new strategy, we need to ensure we have effective monitoring and evaluation processes in place to ensure that the effort, resources and activity we are undertaking are having the impact we want them to have.

## Overview of Resident and Member Engagement

It is essential that we include residents and the ward members and political leadership who represent them as an integral part of everything we do. From consultation around culture in its forms, we have already been able to form an understanding of some of the key issues / asks and needs. We will continue to ask, and continue to act upon the answers. The strategy is only fit for purpose if it reflects what Doncaster wants and what the sector needs, and this is an ongoing conversation. At the time of writing this strategy, our consultation tells us that:



- Residents like the community spirit in their area, having access to green spaces and local amenities and places to visit. They would like more activities, shops, bars, restaurants, and regeneration. They support the six Borough Strategy Wellbeing Goals and Great 8 priorities, all of which a strong cultural offer will help deliver. Achieving our culture-related priorities would mean wider acknowledgement and development of a more sustainable voluntary, faith and community sector, more opportunities for young people and greater equality of opportunity across the borough.
- Activities related to parks and open spaces and sport and physical activities are most popular and utilised amongst residents and most residents think the cinema, museum and local heritage offer is good or excellent. However, more than half of respondents access cultural activities outside of the borough because they are not available in Doncaster (or perceived that way), and more than half think Doncaster's cultural offer is better for residents than visitors.
- Young people reported that there is a need for more arts and cultural awareness and opportunities in education, particularly around opportunities and careers in the sector. They agree that there are some great assets and events in the borough, but feel that there is not enough information about them and they are not always accessible for a number of reasons, including travel, cost and feeling that it is 'not for them. They do not think that the diversity of the borough is reflected in the current cultural offer and believe young people need more opportunities and places to go that are child-friendly and more accessible.
- Perception of Doncaster tends to be poor, with some residents voicing critical/negative comments. However, there is a notable dislocation between negativity and passionate levels of local pride, and it is this passion that we need to harness. There is a need to ensure residents are closely involved in creating place narrative - voicing the things they are proud of, telling their story rather than hearing it from someone else. We need to make sure it is the narratives residents are most proud and passionate about that are being promoted and made visible locally and beyond.
- Feedback from members fell into 7 categories:
  - Promotion and marketing – there is a need a single, attractive place (a website or publication) for residents to see what's on and provide access points to get involved with cultural activity
  - Community champions and advocates are vital to community engagement and leadership
  - Heritage – needs strong and unequivocal local ownership to celebrate each area's diverse identities and stories; we need to look to repurpose heritage buildings in a way that both celebrates their past but looks to the future.
  - Landscape and outdoor assets – we have lots and diverse assets (including blue assets) which are underutilised and not promoted enough, we need the community to get more involved and to feel that they are the 'owners' and guardians of these places.
  - Writing, authors, and publishers – we need to showcase talent more and link in with other themes e.g., community stories of all types as well as important historical anniversaries and events.
  - Arts in education – we need to encourage more creativity inside the curriculum wherever possible, as its legislated absence is having an impact. We also need to provide more arts experiences outside of school, and encourage whole family and intergenerational participation in communities, centrally and nationally.
  - Barriers to progress – we have barriers around access, perception, funding, community capacity and the failure to engage specific groups, and these must be addressed, as well as the issue that the offer is often centralised in the city centre and this deters engagement and participation for many.

## Strategic Challenges

**Deprivation and inequalities.** We are the 48<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England, with 68/194 of our communities among the 20% most deprived in England and only 13 in the 20% least deprived.

**Covid-19 pandemic.** Significant impact on our health and wellbeing and changes to the way people live their lives. The way, and extent to which customer's access goods and services has changed, adversely affecting businesses' viability. Some people have become less confident and social isolation has been exacerbated. Business closures and job losses, and an increased cost of living have reduced income and spending power.

**Funding awareness and skills to secure.** Government funds have been focussed on health and social care and business survival rather than expansion and improvement. Some partners lack the awareness of existing and emerging funding opportunities and the skills and resources to successfully bid for them.

**Climate Change.** The need to decarbonise requires both changes in behaviours and investment in energy efficiency improvements and cleaner energy use. These costs will affect business's ability to invest to improve and expand, resulting in additional competition for reduced levels of external funding. Culture should also reflect the challenges of climate change, and inevitably has an impact on creativity, particularly for our young people.

**Local community capacity and ownership.** Finding local people to decide on, develop and deliver provision in their area is difficult. Many people have busy lives, and such involvement is often in addition to employment and family commitments. Sometimes engagement exists, but not across a broad section of the community, and it can easily become the voice of a few strong and committed individuals that prevail, rather than a genuine community response.

**Participation.** Barriers can be financial, location or transport-based, or simply a lack of awareness and knowledge as to what provision is available. In some cases, there is a perception that certain provision is aimed at a different group/customer base to that which we see ourselves, and this can be a huge deterrent. The perception that something is 'not for me' is a huge barrier to engaging with Culture and, quite often, is not borne out in reality. Everyone should feel able to engage, and feel to make their own mind up about whether it works for them or not based on actual involvement rather than assumption.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Funding

There are various stable funding opportunities for the creative sector at separate times of the year, as well as irregular drives and initiatives and 'limited offers' depending on what is thought to be needed. In 2021, for example, we received a boost from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority who provided £450,000 to help safeguard the future of the cultural and creative industries across Doncaster, the largest grant settlement in this sector attributed to a local authority in South Yorkshire. The fund is part of South Yorkshire's Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), which has so far provided South Yorkshire businesses of all types with over £45m of support during the pandemic.

This funding has supported the development of the Cultural Strategy, as well as helping local creative and cultural individuals, organisations, and businesses in Doncaster by enabling new creative initiatives and programming new work that will create vibrancy in our towns and villages. This is helping build a programme of activity which can raise the local, regional and national cultural profile for Doncaster and subsequently increase engagement in arts, culture, and heritage activities.

### Community Renewal fund

The Innovation Enterprise Doncaster project is being delivered in partnership by Doncaster Council, Doncaster Chamber of Commerce and Hemingway Design. The project is funded by the national Community Renewal Fund and part funded by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.

The project consists of 4 strands:

1. Engagement and Awareness
2. Innovation and Enterprise Challenge
3. Business Support and Growth
4. Space2Create

The project will use a new approach to deliver a grant scheme (Space2Create – The Art of the Impossible), encouraging local applicants within the creative industries, as well as property owners to find alternative uses for units, or engage in idea development via feasibility, viability and business planning. In doing so, it will support ideas to explore, create, and showcase novel uses of indoor and outdoor spaces – including events, co-working, and trialling innovations.

Creative partner and Doncaster collaborator, Wayne Hemingway, will deliver creative workshops and webinars to support and stimulate the creative community prior to opening of the grant scheme.

Grant criteria will be finalised using outcomes from the events and creative conversations, allowing a more organic, creative way of exploring, shaping and imagining the criteria. Wayne will work as a critical friend to potential applicants to advise, stimulate creative thinking and challenge projects to develop viable propositions to attract capital funding from other sources.

### **National Lottery Heritage Fund**

The National Lottery Heritage Fund Strategic Funding Framework (2019-2024) sets out the vision and the principles that will guide National Lottery investment for the next five years. It sets out how it will invest around £1.2 billion in UK heritage, introduce a streamlined grant-making portfolio, increasingly focus on wellbeing, capacity-building and innovation (both nationally and internationally), explore the use of social investment and commit to increased devolution in our decision-making. This is a major source of funding for Doncaster’s cultural sector, so a collective effort is needed to continue to maximise this opportunity.

### **Place-based opportunities for investment**

For culture, heritage and art to reach its potential in Doncaster, strategic investment is required in infrastructure, people, capacity, skills and programmes of change. This is vital to achieve the Great 8 priority “promote the borough and its cultural, sporting and heritage opportunities”, as well as maximise the wellbeing potential for residents. We are currently working closely with a number of partners and funders to get the maximum possible support for Culture as part of wider goals around regeneration, jobs and skills and health and well-being. This includes advanced discussions with Arts Council England, the British Library, The National Archive, National Lottery for Heritage and Historic England around significant investment partnerships, as well as developing infrastructure bids with a culture focus for the Levelling Up Fund and in anticipation of the forthcoming Shared Prosperity Fund.

In addition, we are actively seeking to maximise investment at all levels, and National (Government and relevant national bodies, such as National Lottery and Historic England), Regional (through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority) and where viable, Local opportunities, will be explored.

Doncaster will also continue to actively seek to develop our capital and revenue pipelines to ensure we have the right, detailed projects that can be submitted for investment. Where schemes need further developing, feasibility studies will be pursued, and consultation and engagement with

residents and key stakeholders will be undertaken to ensure value for money, including maximising the social value impact of culture. We have already made a number of major investments in Culture, from our theatre CAST and ongoing work at Cusworth Hall, through to our brand new and iconic Gallery, Library and Museum and our soon to be open, state of the art archives centre. This is the tip of the iceberg: we also have infrastructure regeneration improvements to heritage via Doncaster and Stainforth Town Deals, and secured funding through Round 1 of the Levelling Up Fund to support such iconic and much loved assets such as the Corn Exchange, St James Baths and Hatfield Colliery Head Stocks.

Investment must focus on ensuring our assets are fit for the 21st century, (and for a 21<sup>st</sup> century population) providing social infrastructure and cultural attractions that celebrate our distinct and diverse heritage across the borough. Doncaster's more detailed approach to investment, including for culture, will be outlined in a place-based investment plan.

## Engagement

It is recognised that, whilst engagement and communications links have been made due to the extent of engagement activity undertaken during the development of the strategy, there are ongoing opportunities for the continuation of consultation based upon existing mechanisms and networks. For example, during engagement it became apparent that young people required a greater voice in shaping and influencing a future cultural agenda. Therefore, whilst some engagement work with young people has taken place, an approach has been established that will allow for future, ongoing engagement and consultation.

## Development of digital provision

Covid 19 has had a significant impact on the UK economy and our way of life in recent times and this impact has been significant for the Culture, Arts and Heritage sector. However, the sector responded accordingly and took the opportunity to diversify its provision by utilising digital technologies to reach both existing, and new audiences (examples of how this was delivered are contained within the supporting evidence base document). Further opportunities to enhance the digital offer could be explored by means of reaching a wider audience of citizens that may not have previously accessed the provision but may be more willing and able to do so virtually.

# THEMES

As we have seen, in order to ensure that the multiple facets of the cultural sector were considered and addressed, 10 themes were identified and used to structure the data, engagement findings, and resulting strategy. However, it is widely recognised that there is vast cross-over between the themes and a collaborative, joined-up approach will be most beneficial for the delivery of this strategy and broader cultural work. Here are more details about those themes, including some examples of where they are already progressing in Doncaster.

## 1. THE ARTS

The Arts are those creative activities that express imaginative or technical skill to produce a product or object or create visual or performing arts. Examples include music, poetry, painting, sculpture, dance, comics, theatre, cinema and (some) architecture. This theme has clear overlaps with other themes in the strategy.

The Arts sector in Doncaster contains a number of well-known groups, such as: **CAST** – a theatre and arts centre beacon with extensive outreach; **Right Up Our Street** who have a great track record of

achieving sustainable creative legacy with communities; **DARTS**, who have given Doncaster 30 years of renowned community arts and health work; **Higher Rhythm**, a music industry organisation running for 21 years offering professional development and accredited training, and, **Sine FM**, Doncaster's licensed community radio station; **Buglight Theatre**, who work internationally as well as locally, using Doncaster community led narratives as their material; the **Little Theatre**, the volunteer led venue that has been putting on fantastic productions and events since 1995; **Breaking Beats**, radio and music created with hard-to-reach young people, and **Doncopolitan**, a focus/platform publication, website and organisation that gives voice to a plethora of cutting edge creatives. This list is by no means exhaustive.

Despite these successes, and the best efforts of the above and initiatives like **Doncaster Creates**, **Historic Doncaster**, **Doncaster Music Hub** and many others, there is still a struggle for new creatives to be visible, develop their careers, and feel connected and valued. We have an amazing range and growing number of creatives (nearly 200 at the time of writing), with an extensive choice of dance practitioners and groups and growing niches in literature, visual arts, film animation and virtual and augmented reality. There are emerging platforms that reflect these niches such as **New Gate**, **D31**, **Doncaster Film Network**, **League of Culture** as well as long-established reading groups and new writing projects.

The Arts sector *is* strengthening in Doncaster, but is still faced with longstanding challenges such as:

- Inequalities of accessibility across different communities;
- Lack of sustainability, funding, infrastructure, and retention and attraction of talent;
- Lack of a singular narrative and a poor historical reputation/image of Doncaster resulting in unequal support for creatives and thus, cultural provision across the borough;
- Lack of joined up working across the Team Doncaster partnership, and
- Failure to fully reap the potential benefits of creativity to help address Doncaster's challenges.

Communications and advocacy to make the arts more visible and the positive impacts more evident, as well as providing opportunities to engage and work with acclaimed artists, are all critical to keep Doncaster's arts sector progressing and to be more competitive amongst neighbouring towns, cities and further afield.

### **Objectives**

- Increase the profile of the arts offer in Doncaster.
- Establish capacity and self-sustaining community-based partnerships across the creative and arts sector.

### **Actions**

- Develop models for sustainable engagement and awareness raising, utilising established areas of best practice.
- Develop an Arts Partnership structure including all appropriate stakeholders.
- Ensure representation from the Culture, Arts and Heritage sector is involved in Team Doncaster membership.
- Identify and utilise best practice from the Culture, Arts and Heritage sector to inform delivery of the strategy.
- Identify and prepare project and initiative options to be used for bids for new funding sources.
- Create a multi-partnership framework for commissioning art in the public realm.

## **2. COMMUNITY ARTS**

Community arts is a people and community-orientated grassroots approach in any media and usually involve professional artists collaborating with communities which may not normally or readily engage with the arts. Community art seeks to bring about an awareness and appreciation of arts to as wide a section of society as possible and make arts accessible to all, often by taking arts to people rather than asking them to come to art. Community art done well is empowering, engaging and challenges perceptions, particularly those with negative connotations.

Community arts have come to the fore in recent years due to the actions taken to help support the community during the pandemic, as well as the growing understanding that art and culture have a positive community impact. We have over 50 such organisations across the borough, many of which have been recognised regionally or nationally as examples of best practice. Most of these are focused on performing arts, literature, crafts and music, with some being more niche clusters that could be supported to link more with communities e.g., film, photography, design, fashion, and visual and decorative arts and craft. An example of a community arts project is **Creative People and Places** – an initiative run by **Right Up Our Street** to increase engagement in arts and culture, particularly across deprived areas.

Current funding systems and other priority concerns means that although there is recognition of what arts can achieve at the highest level, there is an uneven distribution of provision of in-depth arts engagement. Not all communities are exposed to the wider benefits of community arts provision such as diversion from anti-social behaviour, increased employability, and development of transferable skills, increased wellbeing, human flourishing, countering social isolation, and community cohesion.

Despite many examples of good provision, most of this provision is delivered independently and the added benefits of joined up delivery are not always achieved. There is a need to collectively understand, recognise, promote and integrate the arts into community-based provision across other strategies (e.g., economy, health and wellbeing) in order that the sought-after benefits and outcomes are achieved across all communities.

#### **Objectives**

- Support the reach of community arts as a 'way of life', ensuring all communities have local access as well as a more centralised provision.
- Address the challenge of sustainable funding and resourcing.
- Enhance grass roots capacity,

#### **Actions**

- A strategic approach to ensuring an 'art entitlement for every child'.
- 'People led community arts provision - made more obvious, visible and part of everyday'.
- Facilitate and strengthen the development of an independent arts network.
- An information, resources and contacts hub – a Community Arts 'One Stop' Shop.
- Establish and promote hubs and satellites, outreach and in-reach, maintaining relationships through community arts champions - growing participation and confidence.
- Continue to develop a single narrative where appropriate, and/or united Doncaster narratives across all cultural sectors.

### **3. ARTS IN EDUCATION**

Arts in education involves learning through arts experiences and can include performing arts education (dance, drama, music), literature and poetry, visual arts (storytelling), education in film, craft, design, digital arts, media and photography. Arts in education has been shown to encourage development of creativity, critical thinking, motivation and self-confidence – skills that are believed to help children academically across other subjects too. The Team Doncaster Education and Skills



strategy recognises the need for a place-based education and skills offer that connects not only with local culture and heritage, but also with the cultural sector as a source of intellectual stimulation, inspiration and opportunity, including employment.

The devaluing of arts within the school curriculum, for any age group, is a key issue which not only undermines learning in the arts but also the benefits of creativity in learning other subjects. This is a national issue and needs to be continually raised both nationally and locally. The response to this issue is not simple or quick. There is a need to increase and improve provision both in and out of school settings, but also to address parental, peer, and societal attitudes and opinions which often place less importance on arts subjects. **Doncaster Cultural Education Partnership** brings together cultural, educational and Local Government organisations to drive joined-up local arts and culture opportunities for children and young people. This has resulted in numerous schemes and initiatives that are supporting Doncaster children, families and education settings to access the arts, including the Arts Award, which 600 children took part in during 2019/20; **Artsmark**, with 28 education settings accredited in 2020, and **Doncaster Music Education Hub**, which supported 91 education settings in 2019/20. With regard to the Music Education Hub, a recent announcement around the governments new music education strategy means that there will be significant work to ensure greater alignment, resulting in more initiatives like Stage Invasion, a project aimed at providing young people with opportunities to gain real-world experiences within the live music industry. Access is a critical factor in engagement with arts in education opportunities. Ensuring opportunities for people to experience and develop an appreciation for the arts (and access follow-up opportunities to develop their interests and skills) is absolutely key. We must give as many people as possible the opportunity to access the arts without excessive effort or expense in order to build opinion-change and to find ever more practitioners, participants and champions of the arts in Doncaster.

### **Objectives**

- Improve the perceived value of and delivery of arts subjects in the school curriculum.
- Support, encourage and promote options for creative participation in and out of a school setting.
- Support, encourage and promote creative career paths.
- Achieve peer and family support for creative participation and learning, in and out of school.

### **Actions**

- Strategic level commitment to deliver a minimum level of arts activities (embedding a basic entitlement for every child).
- Deliver an advocacy campaign to ensure that current curriculum language that places creative subjects as 'soft skills' is reframed, showcasing delivery of 'vital skills'.
- Creation of and expansion of ambassador roles to lead on the promotion of events/activities.
- Identify a programme of events and or means by which creative achievements by children and young people can be celebrated and showcased.
- Identify, promote and support the routes and pathways by which young people can follow creative interest and passions into sustainable employment and careers.
- Improve access to art so it can be accessed and absorbed in the course of everyday life as well having to make a specific effort to see it.
- Develop Culture as a Centre of Excellence that informs both the University City agenda around HE/FE, as well as the Education and Skills Strategy in general.

## 4. ARTS AND HEALTH

Both the **All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Creative Health report** (2017) and the **World Health Organisation's** scoping review (2019) show that arts interventions increase all types of individual and social wellbeing.

It has always been the case that Arts and Health programmes are art interventions led by creative and cultural professionals with the explicit purpose of improving people's physical or mental wellbeing. The programmes are participatory – people are involved in creating their own work. Whether it is a singing workshop for adults living with dementia or a visual arts session for adults wanting to improve their mental health, the content adapts to those in the room and is always person-led. This is not arts therapy but the work itself is therapeutic. This was more than borne out during the COVID-19 pandemic, when isolation led to increased instances of mental health issues. To try and counter this, there were a number of important interventions of a cultural nature ranging from online choirs, fitness and dance classes to art activity packs, as well as an increased programme of online learning and entertainment, all of which were designed to help mental well-being and increase connected-ness and a sense of purpose and belonging.

Doncaster leads the way in developing innovative creative activity with individuals and communities and has a national profile for good practice in Arts and Health. The borough has a wealth of highly trained experienced artists who deliver high-quality interventions and experiences for people of all ages, backgrounds and needs.

There are strong partnerships between culture, leisure and health sector leaders in the borough who have worked closely together over recent years to develop, pilot and evaluate arts and health programmes in a range of contexts which have achieved powerful results. For example, the **Dance On** scheme for older adults has improved balance and mobility, increased time spent engaging in physical activity and reduced fear of falling. Participants also reported a significant improvement in life satisfaction and feeling more connected to others. Similarly, the **Creative Directions** project supports adults with experience of mental health issues using arts and creativity.

However, as yet, this sort of provision is not universally understood, sustainably funded, nor accessible across the borough.

### Objectives

- Embed arts and culture in health and social care pathways so that all residents can access sustainably funded arts and health programmes in their communities.
- Establish Doncaster as a centre of excellence for the delivery and integration of arts and health programmes across a wide range of health and social care needs.
- Use the existing evidence base to improve the understanding of the positive health impacts of engaging in creative activity in both health professionals and the wider community.
- Increase health and well-being wherever possible using arts and culture as both an enabler and a provider

### Actions

- Share learning from local academic research (University of Leeds and Sheffield Hallam, etc.) to encourage commissioners to fund work for adults experiencing mental health issues and people who are feeling lonely and isolated.
- Continue to develop the case for investment in collaboration with health and culture partners incorporating all age groups and a range of art forms/approaches.



- Build an extended and committed membership to the Arts & Health Board with key health and social care professionals. Develop and deliver an action plan and reporting framework that responds to and informs borough strategy priorities.
- Secure local commissioning money from NHS, Public Health and Social Care to embed arts on prescription models into health and social care pathways.
- Secure additional funds to develop new approaches across age groups.
- Work collaboratively to develop and support an emerging creative workforce to deliver high quality arts and health interventions across the borough.

## 5. LIBRARIES, LITERATURE AND LEARNING

Doncaster has a burgeoning literary scene for both published and unpublished writers alike. There are mini-festivals, events and writing projects some of which focus on the joy of writing or storytelling, while others celebrate the famous, or seek to improve the literacy of residents. The 2019 National Annual Literacy Survey showed that more girls than boys enjoy reading and read daily outside of school, likewise for children aged 5-11 and 16-18. 7% of the working age population do not hold an NVQ Level 1 qualification or equivalent. We are working closely with the National Literacy Trust in this area, and they are providing funding to support important work around literacy, including **Doncaster Stories**, a ten-year programme of fun, exciting and educational projects across the city that will promote a love for reading in young people and their families.

In addition to Doncaster Stories, Doncaster already enjoys an impressive literacy offer including:

- The Ted Hughes Festival
- The rapidly expanding 'Festival of Story Telling'
- Doncopolitan writers' platform and open mic work
- 'Right Up our Street' creative writing initiatives
- The legacy of Doncaster hosting the 2020 Booker prize
- Over 50+ book clubs/reading groups
- A network of community libraries and the brand new Danum Gallery, Library and Museum
  - 150k total active borrowers, over 250k active users and 225k registered borrowers in 2020 (sadly in steady decline since 2016)
  - Over 3k new library members, 50k total enquiries and 100k issues and renewals in 2020, (in drastic decline from 2019, potentially partly COVID-19 related).
  - Over 26k digital issues in 2020, a significant increase from 2019 (just over 17k).
  - 5,900 volunteers in libraries in 2020.

New relationships are already developing in Doncaster between story writers and visual arts/film developers to develop the literature sector into new innovative directions. Taking the notion that great stories are not just reliant upon reading and writing, and that new ways of exploring story telling may draw in those who are challenged in literacy skills, we are finding fresh and innovative ways to promote these key cultural offers.

Despite the impressive cluster of work and writers, there is still a lack of joined up, unique, dynamic narrative and sustained (and sustainable) resources for this sector. The focus needs to be on promoting and improving access to and engagement with what is already available and enhancing the offer.

### Objectives

- Ensure that the borough's image and profile better reflect and includes our literary heritage.
- Ensure borough-wide activity; with centralised events having local aspects.

- Capitalise on Doncaster’s literary/heritage assets, building on the burgeoning literature scene, published and unpublished writers alike.
- Support for local writers to develop and flourish.

#### **Actions**

- Develop a Doncaster writing group, hold workshops for writers of all ages, abilities and interests.
- Regular literary festivals events and writing projects (e.g., Ted Hughes Festival, Right Up Our Street initiative).
- Promote experimental/laboratory style literary events across the borough.
- Ensure appropriate means by which partners and stakeholders can share ideas and make collaborative decisions.
- Expand our story telling beyond simply the written word to areas such as visual arts and filmmaking.
- Establish a framework for positioning, showcasing and promotion of our literary assets.

## **6. MUSEUMS, HERITAGE AND ARCHIVES**

Doncaster has nearly 900 listed buildings, scheduled monuments, parks, and gardens, as well as more than 8 museums, the Doncaster Archives and the Local Studies Library. The objects, collections, film, documents and histories of the borough give a sense of place and identity and help tell the stories of Doncaster’s rich history and heritage. Heritage Doncaster operates the Council’s heritage sites and services, with other sites and services run by other organisations and volunteers (e.g., Brodsworth Hall and Gardens is owned and managed by English Heritage).

The opening of the Danum Gallery Library and Museum (D-GLAM) in 2021 is the most recent example of improving the quality of provision and access to such artefacts to enable a broad audience to appreciate the history of the borough and its individual communities. D-GLAM shares its gallery space with organisations and individuals to host exhibitions that involve both local artists and the wider world, including the internationally renowned. There is a lot of grassroots heritage activity, particularly around celebrating and commemorating Doncaster’s past, all of which could be further built upon by the development of a community champion's approach.

Despite our abundance of cultural heritage, there remains a challenge in how this is accessed, and by whom. For example, stakeholder feedback suggests that often communities feel distant from their heritage, both in terms of awareness and separation between town centre-based collections and the communities they represent. There tends to be a top-down museums sector culture, with a shortage of sustained community leadership capacity, and lack of joined up promotion. Similarly, there is a lack of resources and a failure to perhaps appreciate what we have and to make the most of these assets we through applying best practice.

The borough’s collective narrative, image and branding should be continually reviewed and updated with input from all sectors and residents. Doncaster has historically been known as a railway and mining town and then an ex-mining town. Going forward, although this heritage should always be acknowledged and appreciated, the borough could be marketed in a different way that emphasises the present and the future as well as the past e.g., as a city that is a centre for creative and digital industries. There is a need to find the right balance between remembering our past and letting it hinder our future; between celebrating our heritage, and looking forward to the next chapter.

#### **Objectives**

- Develop a thorough understanding of our current provision and our shared plans for the future.
- Raise the profile and enhance our heritage offer (for residents & visitors).
- Improve engagement across all parts of the community, including the development of community champions, with a focus on young people to ensure they have an opportunity to influence future service provision.

#### Actions

- Create a sustained approach to celebrating the breadth of heritage, representative of the community, as part of a Heritage Master Plan.
- Develop 'Promotion Platforms' for (and access to) 'Unheard Stories'.
- Establish a system for sustained 3-way relationships: communities, voluntary sector & museum specialists.
- Develop a strategy to retain, attract and build heritage talent in Doncaster.
- Better use of Online, Digital and New Technology.

## 7. CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

A recent study by the Fifth Sector found that South Yorkshire had a larger than previously estimated number of creative industries, comprising over 4,000 companies and a workforce of over 31,000 people. Whilst the structure of the sector – which reflects the high levels of freelance working and microenterprises typical in the creative sector – makes it hard to provide exact measures of output, they suggest that culture and creative industries are worth up to £2 billion in GVA. Doncaster has approximately 21% of the total jobs in Culture, Arts and Heritage across South Yorkshire, with 1,500 of these jobs in Doncaster in 2018. There has been a steady increase in number of creative and cultural industry businesses since 2014, up to a maximum of 385 in 2018/19. It is anticipated that 4 of the major cultural organisations will contribute around £4million and 167 jobs to Doncaster's economy by 2024. Although Sheffield dominates the sector in the region, Doncaster holds its own, coming second in terms of business population by supply chain (edging ahead of Rotherham during 20/21, i.e. *during* the pandemic), and in terms of creative skills delivery. Doncaster's past, present and potential is filled with examples of where art meets innovation and where creativity is at the heart of engineering and future manufacturing. There are many examples of internationally recognised achievements in the borough, for example, **Wayne Sables** winning Best Experimental Film at the Montreal Film Festival, and **Doncaster Fashion Week** (using the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure) showcasing the connectivity between creativity, industry, the talent of the 'next generation' and the technology that allowed Doncaster to 'host the world'.

Opportunities related to this sector include the provision of low-cost facilities in the borough, as well as our enviable connectivity to major cities and further afield. The Creative Industries are incredibly talented and skilful and want to work to benefit the borough. The presence of a diverse and strong creative industry sector contributes dynamism of all kinds to the Doncaster offer.

However, there are several challenges for this sector:

Issues with attracting and retaining talent, leading to loss of impact and unique selling points.

Local Creative Industries often feel undervalued, underutilised, and underrepresented in decision-making processes.

A general lack of support and advocacy for creative industries.

#### Objectives

- Raise the profile of our creative industries sector, including improving access and visibility
- Enhance the involvement of the sector in the borough's strategic decision-making.

- Enhance the involvement of young people in the sector’s strategic decision-making.
- Attract and retain Creative Industries to/in Doncaster.

### **Actions**

- Formation of a sector-led, independent organisation to support Doncaster Creative Industry development and promotion.
- Take advantage of the growing UK film industry, associated with both broadcast and streaming services, in terms of general production and artist led creativity
- Provide greater access to creative spaces and environments, and pathways to creative industries in all their diversity
- Establish a body that represents all sub-elements of the creative industries – forming a collective voice for the sector and a means of tackling common issues and matters (e.g., platforms and showcase opportunities, marketplace development, information and resources, skills and training).
- Establish a mentoring and career pathways support programme.

## **8. EVENTS**

We’re justifiably proud of the programme of great events and festivals that appeal to both visitors and residents happen throughout the year in Doncaster, for example the Tour de Yorkshire, the St Leger Festival, Fake Festival, Doncaster Pride, DN Festival of Light, Culture Crawl, Art Bomb, Armed Forces Day, our Armistice Commemorations and many, many more. Popular events provide a value beyond the event itself, for example through accommodation, restaurants and other visitor economy activities, particularly for those who travel from outside of Doncaster. Improved, and more widespread evaluation of impact is required across all events to help further hone (and expand) our approach.

Events also provide an opportunity to increase the visibility of Doncaster’s niche cultural sectors such as literature and writing, heritage and history, visual arts, design and innovation, film and AV. However, there is often a failure to fully exploit these opportunities, and so niches stay niche. In locality terms, events are ideally positioned to provide skill development opportunities for local communities.

Common barriers to participation include a lack of knowledge (or interest) about provision, provision not matching demand, negative perception of the town, transport issues (including cost), and disability and diversity not being catered for. Often, there is failure to link communities and potential localised event opportunities with major/central events. There is a need to ensure that diverse communities across the borough can connect easily with major events, and that the events appeal to a diverse range of people to encourage engagement.

We will actively tackle the lack of awareness of our offer and challenge the negative perceptions that lead to losing audiences to other places. We will improve coordination and focus on Sustainable Development, particularly around resources, collaboration, and volunteering. We will continuously change and challenge the perception of what Arts/ Culture / Events can constitute.

Opportunities to improve the provision of events also include better coordination, sustainable development and provision, clear guidance and support to encourage communities to create their own events, as well as changing and challenging the perception of arts, culture and events. We must also always consider our audience, i.e. what is exciting and interesting to our residents, and what will draw them into participation – without, of course, compromising standards in exchange for simple ‘crowd pleasing’ activities.

We will promote the Cultural sector as a field with a variety of opportunities to get involved, that includes a range of highly specialised jobs – and work hard on retention and attraction of our arts talent pool, as well as to continue to strive to create and attract world class events.

### Objectives

- Increase the profile of, and co-delivery of events in Doncaster (residents, creative industries, and public sector partners).
- Build community capacity and increase community ownership of the Events programme.
- Ensure the events programme includes community-based, as well as centrally based events
- Focus on young people: Ensure future capacity to lead and innovate Doncaster Events and Support career pathways
- Ensure events reflect and exploit Doncaster niche areas of development
- Improve access to events by more diverse / hardest to reach participants

### Actions

- Create a ‘framework’ approach to Events so that they happen on a number of levels
- Establishment of a Community Champions network
- Create a singular promotion and information point.
- Articulate Doncaster’s Events & Creative offer as a united narrative.
- Establish an Events Community & Partnership Network
- Set up an Events ‘One Stop Shop’: Resources, Information & Support (for new / existing event organisers)
- Develop a forum to give young people a voice in shaping Events / the Events programme (CROSS-REF. Re ‘The Arts’, Outdoors, Heritage)
- Develop a model for young people to have ‘Events Apprenticeships’
- Asset / Interest Based Development Themes for Events

## 9. SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

There are already a number of assets and activities within Doncaster that engage residents and attract visitors into the borough through both sport and physical activity participation and spectating. Strengthening the opportunities for residents and attracting people into Doncaster to experience more physical activity and sport is high on our agenda, and we have a proactive approach to seeking them out, supported by our strong physical activity and sport Strategy, notably Get Doncaster Moving, which, since 2016, has made a significant impact.

Doncaster has several professional/elite-level sports teams including Doncaster Rovers and Doncaster Belles football teams, Doncaster Knights Rugby Union and Doncaster Rugby League teams. Aside from football and rugby, we enjoy a wealth of other options including, but not limited to, athletics, cricket, hockey, swimming, gymnastics, rowing, boxing, martial arts and dancing. These provide a range of opportunities to take part, while also producing talented athletes who have performed at a national and international level over the years. To many, these are spectator opportunities; but these organisations, along with our amateur community leagues and participation programmes also represent opportunities via their junior and adult provision as well as their facilities – giving residents increased opportunities to access sport and physical activity for leisure as well as pathways into elite level competition and professional sport careers.

Sport and physical activity is one of the unsung elements of Culture, having the largest volunteer base in the borough, and the highest levels of participation of all cultural activities. We have a long heritage of strong resident engagement ranging from sports teams associated with our former industries to a

wide range of both informal and organised sport and physical activity within each of our 80 plus communities. Our sportspeople have also historically been, and continue to be, represented at a national and international level.

We also enjoy local access to various water-based sports at Hatfield Water Park, have numerous golf courses and fishing lakes located across the borough, and have invested significantly on improving access to safe cycling routes via cycle paths and cycle circuits/tracks, including the international standard closed track at The Dome.

Doncaster schools also provide sports participation options across a range of sports, including engaging in competition against other schools across the region.

We have over recent years attracted major sport events including the Rugby League World Cup and the Tour de Yorkshire, and we will continue to pursue hosting opportunities wherever possible, linking in with our Visitor Strategy and the ambitions of our Events Team and positively boosting both our Visitor and wider Economy.

We will support the enhancement of the culture, arts and heritage sector in the refresh of the Get Doncaster Moving strategy, as well as disseminate the vital learning gained from many years of sustained (and sometimes challenging) community engagement undertaken as part of this initiative. We will continue to identify and overcome any barriers to access/participation, particularly with regard to those who are harder to reach (women and girls, the disabled, those on low incomes) and promote sport in all its forms as a hugely positive factor in terms of health and well-being and community cohesion.

The key aim is to ensure the visibility and accessibility of these opportunities reaches all sections of all our individual communities, and that the complex challenge of addressing the inequality of access is identified and tackled using a whole systems approach.

### **Objectives**

- Raise the profile of our current sports and physical activity offer / programme amongst residents - for both participation and spectating. Continue to increase the number of residents whose levels of physical activity are at least 30 minutes per week, thereby helping to create healthy and vibrant communities and tackle health and well-being issues.
- Continue to attract major sporting events, outside of our current provision (e.g., Rugby league world cup, Tour de Yorkshire) - ensuring close links with our Visitor Strategy and Events Team.
- Maximise legacy opportunities from major events (e.g., hosting Rugby League world cup matches has resulted in provision of grants for local grassroots rugby, expanding the opportunities for local people to participate). Further Identify and overcome barriers to access/participation, particularly with regard to those who are harder to reach (women and girls, the disabled, those on low incomes).

### **Actions**

- To further promote our programme of sporting events to a local, regional, national and international audience, as well as add to the offer
- To better capture, analyse and understand data around visitor numbers, participation and impact (direct and indirect) on our visitor economy, and to ensure this data is used when making plans and decisions
- To include the culture, arts and heritage sector in the refresh of the Get Doncaster Moving strategy.

- To widely share learning from Get Doncaster Moving that can provide examples of best practice to the Cultural sector and beyond.

## 10. OUTDOORS, LANDSCAPES AND URBAN REALM

The public realm is the face of the borough – it is what greets people visiting Doncaster and is what our residents live within and experience every day. There are various examples of public art in the town centre, but examples in outlying areas are not as well known or publicised. There are approximately 5,800 hectares of publicly accessible green spaces across Doncaster, but 11 of the 88 community profile areas are deficient in all types of green space. There are many public open spaces across the borough which attract visitors from within the borough and beyond for many different uses. Sandall Park, for example, attracts visitors to enjoy the open space, but also to participate in the weekly Parkrun and an ongoing programme of regular events. Optimising the multi-use of different spaces when appropriate provides a great opportunity for attracting visitors to the borough.

It is important to ensure the amenities located in public areas within different communities allow visitors optimum use of the site and get as much of it as they can. In addition to the facility itself, this could include public art, commemorative items to celebrate local heritage and history, or simply the ability for residents to safely access and enjoy various activities in local parks, woodlands, and greenspace. It is important to ensure that local communities have a voice when it comes to the development and improvement of the local outdoor spaces in their area.

Creating unique and attractive places encourages increased use from within the community and attracts visitors from other communities or outside the borough, in turn contributing to local spend and sharing economic growth benefits across all areas. Most of all, it makes Doncaster a nice place to live, to visit, to be in, and the importance of such spaces in terms of health and well-being is hard to overestimate, particularly in deprived areas.

This theme has clear overlaps with other themes since outdoors and the urban realm can be used to protect and celebrate heritage and history, showcase creative industries and the arts, improve health and well-being, encourage physical activity and hold events. Having a good outdoor and urban realm offer will also contribute to improved community safety, pride and enjoyment in the areas around the borough.

Although much work has been done to maintain and enhance our urban realm (e.g., improved Station forecourt, public murals and street art, creation of the civic quarter), there remains room for improvement across the borough due to:

- Lack of awareness across all communities of outdoor assets/provision.
- Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour which affects willingness to access provision.
- Breadth of engagement when deciding on options for parks management.
- Tension between broadening use of outdoor spaces by different users versus the perceived risk of improper use by some groups e.g., groups of young people/anti-social behaviour.
- Tension between providing security from inappropriate vehicular access and access for disabled users.
- Tension of preservation and conservation areas versus increasing/popularised usage.

### Objectives

- Identify, communicate, and raise the profile of Doncaster’s outdoor, landscape, and urban realm offer.
- Encourage resident use of our outdoor, landscape, and urban realm offer.



- Encourage and support an environmental protection mindset amongst communities, leading by example with best environmental practices and estate management wherever possible and practicable.

#### **Actions**

- Develop a single place of promotion for Doncaster’s outdoors offer, with multiple means of access e.g., webpage, social media, circulars to schools, community hubs
- Identify non-users, least users, and assets of least use, with reasons and response options.
- Identify, consider and apply best practice on how to overcome barriers to access/use by non- or low-user groups.
- Map all outdoor assets.
- Establish new or support existing community groups to manage outdoor assets e.g., ‘Friends of...’ groups.
- Establish or promote community groups to aid low use cohorts to access outdoor assets.

## **CROSS CUTTING BENEFITS**

Delivering the thematic objectives and actions defined above will not only improve the cultural offer and make it more accessible, but also have multiple benefits across the six wellbeing goals defined in the borough strategy, Doncaster Delivering Together.

<b>DDT wellbeing goals</b>	<b>Benefit from improved cultural offer</b>
Healthy and Compassionate	<p>Attractive green and open spaces and urban public realms encourage people to move around in and engage with their environment and interact with people around them. This helps improve physical, social and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Keeping people active and engaged in cultural activities can help tackle specific issues such as obesity, loneliness, isolation, anxiety and depression. Creative expression helps maintain the immune system and is clinically proven to reduce stress, elevate mood, and lower blood pressure.</p>
Greener and Cleaner	<p>Provision of high quality local cultural activities reduces the need to travel further afield and thus reduces travel emissions. Additionally, attractive green and open spaces and urban public realms can encourage engagement in outdoor activities, improve appreciation of the environment. Aesthetically pleasing surroundings can also motivate communities and individuals to take ownership of their local area and maintain it to a high standard, as well as inspire sustainable attitudes and behaviours.</p>
Fair and Inclusive	<p>The cultural offer will aim to engage all people, of all ages, from all household types. Meeting the needs, wishes and interests of Doncaster’s diverse communities will be a central part of all themes within the strategy. Public art reflects a community and its surroundings working to cultivate a cultural identity by setting a community apart and attracting people to its uniqueness. Artwork helps express a community's values and creates an elevated sense of awareness for community members and visitors.</p>



Safe and Resilient	The provision of diversionary activities can reduce antisocial behaviour and low-level crime. High quality facilities, venues and activities will encourage people to adopt a respectful approach to their local area and motivate them to maintain the high standards through greater community pride.
Prosperous and Connected	Local provision of the things that people want to do will support local spending of local money. This local spend supports business growth within the borough and will also help attract visitors from regional, national and international locations.
Skilled and Creative	Encouraging development of skills related to the cultural sector has been proven to support skill acquisition in other areas. Creativity in itself is a widely transferable skill applicable to a vast range of roles and industries and can offer performance advantages and opportunities for innovation which are unachievable in the absence of creative thinking

## WORKING BETTER TOGETHER

This strategy identifies a series of activity and/or commitments that we will need to deliver on if we are going to achieve our vision for Doncaster. In the same way that multiple stakeholders have contributed to the development of the strategy, its implementation is equally dependent on the collective effort and contribution of us all.

Working better together is predicated on three simple (but not always straightforward) principles:

- Improve communication and collaboration across the system;
- Simplify strategy and governance arrangements, and
- Prioritise initiatives and secure sustainable funding.

Marketing is vital, and we also need to develop and promote a website or publication that brings our Culture in all its complexity into one easily accessible and simple to navigate place, building on the Visit Doncaster website but expanding and refining its contents to provide a definitive view of who we are, what we do, what's on and how people can get involved.

If we are serious about Culture (and we are), we need to think about how we embed the sector and its work and focus into everyday life. Indeed, there is no reason why Culture shouldn't become as integral to Doncaster as Engineering is, or as Healthcare has become. In fact, that is our aim. Culture as a Centre of Excellence would give this vital sector the elevated profile it deserves, as well as make a clear statement around its ongoing importance to us now and in the future.

It is also imperative that our 'team' includes stakeholders drawn from every aspect of Doncaster: organisations, businesses, communities, individuals. Different stakeholders will have different roles to play, often at different stages, and it is acknowledged that, within any given cohort, different people and organisations will be able to make different scales of intervention according to their own circumstances. Here are some examples:

### **Residents**

- Continue to engage in plan-making processes to ensure that Team Doncaster are focusing efforts and resources on the right things.
- Take advantage of local community capacity.
- Use local amenities rather than travel elsewhere.
- Spend locally.
- Work with local public and private sector partners to improve community-led initiatives.
- Look after your local area.
- Volunteer.

### **Elected members (Ward Councillors, Members of Parliament, Parish Councils)**

- Lobby Government (local, regional and national) for funding opportunities to support the implementation of the interventions required, to the scale required.
- Provide a two-way link between residents, community groups and local businesses and community orgs.
- Give the culture strategy objectives due consideration in any local lobbying activity on behalf of residents and businesses.

### **Private and Public Sector Organisations**

- Work with residents and community organisations to provide information, advice and guidance around local community initiatives.

- Representation and/or links with community organisations to ensure specific support opportunities (e.g., venues, sponsorship, funding etc.) are identified and realised.
- Put in place appropriate teams/staff to contribute, support or lead on the activity agreed by the partnership.

## Delivery Partners

The following represents a selection of the organisations that have contributed to the development of this strategy, and that will contribute to its delivery. With such a broad and diverse range of partners, it is important that we coordinate and join-up our efforts to maximise the impact of our individual and collective response.

Age UK, Arts Council, National Archives, Bentley Urban Farm, BME United, Breaking Beats, Brodsworth Hall, Cast, The Conservation Volunteers, Corvis Communications, D31, DARTS, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Doncaster Chamber of Commerce, Doncaster Council, Doncaster Civic Trust, Doncaster College, Doncaster Creates, Doncaster Cultural Education Partnership, Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust, Doncaster and District Heritage Association, Doncaster Minster, Doncaster Mumbler, Doncaster Music Hub, Doncaster residents, Doncaster Visitor Economy Group, Doncopolitan, Don Valley Catchment Trust, EPIC Crime Prevention, Frenchgate Shopping Centre, Friends of the Doncaster Mansion House, Friends of Doncaster Museums, Friends of Parks (reps), Get Doncaster Moving, 8+ independent heritage groups/organisations, Heritage Doncaster, Higher Rhythm, Horizon Policy Design Group, 30+ independent creatives/artists, Jozara, Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry Trustees, Lakeside Village Shopping Centre, League of Culture, the Little Theatre, Mexborough Business Centre, Mick Jenkinson Arts, Natasha Clarke Arts, National Literacy Trust, New Fringe, Right Up Our Street, Royal Opera House – Royal Ballet, Wayne Sables Project, The Sandhouse, Schools (teachers), South Yorkshire Air Museum, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, South Yorkshire Writers’ Hive, Team Doncaster, TrueTone, Vulcan Experience, Wayne Sables Project, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, plus a myriad of grassroots artists and individuals committed to the cause.

## Governance and monitoring progress

We need a specific/dedicated group to drive delivery of the strategy. This group will identify short term targets, agree activity to achieve them, coordinate joined-up partnership working, coordinate bids for any funding that becomes available, and manage performance. Most of all, it will provide support and guidance, as well as clear direction, to help deliver better Culture outcomes for all, under the aegis of Team Doncaster, the partners, stakeholders and residents who put Doncaster first.

Governance is yet to be fully agreed, but it is envisaged that a useful mechanism would be a Doncaster Culture Portfolio Board led by key partners, with accountability to Team Doncaster, to adopt this responsibility and ensure that progress is measurable so we can continuously determine and communicate progress and oversee and manage change.

Based on the data currently available (included in the Evidence Base), the table below gives suggestions of metrics that could initially be used to track progress while appropriate measures are agreed.

<b>The Arts</b>	Number of participants engaged across various projects
<b>Community Arts</b>	Number of participants engaged across various projects
<b>Arts in Education</b>	Number and uptake of arts-related courses at all ages
<b>Arts and Health</b>	Number of projects addressing health issues and measuring health impact
<b>Libraries, Literature and Learning</b>	Visitor and user numbers
<b>Museums, Heritage and Archives</b>	Visitor and user numbers

<b>Creative and Cultural Industries</b>	Number of businesses and jobs in the sector Number of enrolments on creative courses
<b>Events</b>	Number of participants and demographics Economic and social impact of events
<b>Sport and Physical Activity</b>	Proportion of population meeting activity level recommendations
<b>Outdoors, Landscapes &amp; Urban Realm</b>	Number of public art pieces across the borough Footfall in public open spaces Number of communities/profile areas deficient in green/open space

All partners must be open to appropriate sharing of data associated with participation/take up, visitor numbers/spend, job creation and losses, etc. such that this can be accumulated to determine collective impact/progress towards the borough's goals. This data will be key in determining a way forward, as well as an important factor in understanding and evaluating impacts.

As targets and performance measures are identified, it may become evident that different data and more in-depth data is needed (e.g., rather than just visitor numbers, demographics of those visitors too). The governance/implementation group will identify these changing data needs as part of the monitoring process.

Stakeholder engagement also needs to be an ongoing process. The engagement exercises provided useful insight into what residents want to be able to access, but this will constantly change as interests and the offer evolve. Groups who did not engage this time (e.g., ethnicities other than White British, age groups younger than 45 etc.), as well as other minority groups, should be engaged and the results considered in implementation of this strategy.

Similarly, since this is an ever-changing sector, developing policies and industry changes locally, regionally, nationally and even internationally should be continuously considered during implementation of the strategy.

Perhaps most importantly of all, we need to be clear about what Culture means to us in Doncaster. This doesn't mean defining what we like and what we don't, or pigeonholing ourselves as a place with a fixed identity. Just as Doncaster is a place of places, perhaps it is appropriate to think of ourselves as a Culture of Cultures, where arts, craft, leisure, sport, history, heritage, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and age and background co-exist in a vibrant environment that both encourages and celebrates our differences and, in doing so, brings a closer appreciation and understanding to our communities.

Doncaster has a lot going for it. It has an enviable history, it has great and unique assets, world class facilities and, most of all, and it has incredible people doing amazing things. Doncaster is ambitious: it wants to be the best place it can be, and it wants to showcase those people and those amazing things, yes, to share our pride in people and place with the rest of the world, but also for ourselves and our sense of identity, worth and well-being.

This strategy is a starting point, not an end destination. We have a lot to do, and a long way to go: we know the journey will be challenging, but it's more than worth the effort.